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National Executive Office of the Puppeteers of America
Western College, Oxford, Ohio

Executive Secretary
William Ireland Duncan
Western College, Oxford, Ohio

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Barbara Amundson...708 W. Grand River, East Lansing, Mich.
Olga Stevens.....Middlebury, Indiana

Office of the Puppetry Journal, Ashville, Ohio

EDITOR Vivian Michael.....Ashville, Ohio

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Peg Blicke.....28 Indian Springs Drive, Columbus, O.

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Helen Halman Joseph....12700 Shaker Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio
Marjorie B. McPharlin.....4426 N. High St., Columbus, Ohio
Martin Stevens.....Middlebury, Ind.
George Lashaw.....295 E. Buchtel Ave., Akron, Ohio
Arthur Zapel.....2905 Fairfield Ave. Ft. Wayne 6, Indiana
Jean Starr Wiksell.....532 Stanford, Baton Rouge, La.
Alfred Wallace.....209 E. 88th St., New York City, N. Y.
Wilhelmina Hedde.....3636 Armstrong Ave., Dallas, Texas

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The Emperor's Nightingale

More than a hundred years ago, Hans Anderson, Danish spinner of fairy tales, made puppets and built a toy theater for them. Perhaps he foresaw the possibilities of puppet production as he wove his fantastic creatures into fairy tales. Be that as it may, Jiri Trnka, Czechoslovakian artist, fascinated with the beauty of Anderson's tales, and their puppet possibilities, recently produced *The Emperor's Nightingale*, a full length color movie, with those delightful little actors of wood and cloth. It had its American premiere at the Trans Lux Theater in N. Y. this summer.

The story was originally produced in Czechoslovakia as a color pantomime with an accompanying musical score. The American version has a narration by Phyllis McGinley. The narrator is Boris Karloff. The makers of the film have captured all the old magic and wisdom and simplicity of Hans Christian Anderson, and translated them into a fascinating film. The technical qualities of the film are outstanding. The puppets are beautifully carved, the settings are perfectly composed, the stop motion action of the puppets produces a perfectly delightful flowing animation which blends with the musical score. It is fascinating entertainment from beginning to end.

The Czech poet, Vitezslav Nezval, has written the following tribute to the film. "In the glass house behind the Chinese Wall, life itself is stifled. Everything is sickly, delicate, fragile as glass. Here both Child and Emperor droop and decay. The Master of Ceremonies, on little turtle feet, decrees the daily round; Rise! eat! sleep! die! - How can the Emperor but languish, the child pine away? And yet, under the great wild sky, people are alive and the nightingale sings his song. A nightingale is a living creation of flesh and blood — an instrument nothing more than a mechanism! But what if the Master of Ceremonies should prefer the mechanical nightingale? For him who once has heard the nightingale's song, there can be no question, no choice. When the nightingale sings, human longing breaks down the Chinese Wall, the glass house is shattered; man opens the window and lets death pass out to water the graves in his beloved graveyard and to set up tombstones in memory of his own."

Trnka tells William Snyder, owner of the American rights to the film that he conceived the idea during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, remembering that Anderson's nightingale, too, could not sing in the bondage of a cage. This was followed by two hard years of building in Prague, where Trnka wrote the script, made more than a hundred puppets, made the sets and costumes with his assistants and filmed the

entire production with one camera. More than a thousand portrait studies were made before the final cast was carved. Up to eight interchangeable heads are used for some puppets to portray mood or changes in expression.

So-called stop-motion photography was employed to film the picture. The heads, bodies and limbs were moved slightly by Trnka and his assistants in each film frame to produce the continuity of motion.

Trnka explains, "The motive back of all this work was to present a color fairy tale, to entertain by carrying audiences back to childhood to make people remember and forget - remember the good things and forget their sorrows."

To understand Anderson's motive for writing the story is not so easy. Perhaps it grew from his childhood confinement to a solitary room, his subjection to poverty and bondage which he finally evaded by running away. Perhaps the nightingale expressed his longing for freedom and beauty which were denied him in his childhood. Whatever his motive, the story has endured through the years and remains one of his most delightful tales.



Bunin's Alice

One of the New York critics suggests that of all the stories which challenge translation to the screen the most difficult — even the most resistant is **Alice in Wonderland**. The reason is clear because not only the whimsical Lewis Carroll is cherished by millions of fanatics, but the story is crowded with creatures of fancy which are visually perishable.

In spite of this there have been five films of the classic, two of them appearing this summer among great columns of comparison, commendation and criticism by the critics. One of the films was Bunin's **Alice in Wonderland** with puppets portraying the well beloved fanciful characters.

This was a European production which began to take shape in Bunin's mind in 1945 in Hollywood, where he had been working with M. G. M. on the Ziegfeld Follies. He created for the opening reel of this film a puppet replica of Will Rogers with a special latex material which would change expressions. These flexible faces give his puppet characters the illusion of actually speaking.

As a puppeteer Bunin saw in **Alice in Wonderland** the ideal subject for a motion picture, which by combining live actors and puppets would be entirely three-dimensional. Previously motion pictures had combined live figures with two-dimensional flat figures. To Bunin this attempted marriage of live actors to two-dimensional flat figures was neither artistically harmonious nor believable. To him, the only way to create

credibility and artistic success was to treat the inhabitants of Wonderland as three dimensional figures with Alice as the young actress. That is, he figured that since Alice is substantially real, she should be played by a real person, and since the Wonderland characters are all unreal, they should be represented by contrasting figures of fantasy. Basically such a purpose was smart and sound; however, this technique apparently had a tendency, according to the consensus of most of the critics, to limit the free flights of satirical fancy and to give the production a woodenness and a stiffness.

It took Mr. Bunin almost two years to complete and perfect his plans. In September 1947 together with 20 production assistants and their families, he moved to France to carry on the work for the film.

The puppet scenes were made in Paris, animated and photographed there; sets reproducing Oxford University were built in France with English actors used. The musical sound track and the voicing of the English version was done in London with a cast of well known British actors where J. Arthur Rank built an Ansco (color) process laboratory at a cost of \$100,000 to produce the finished product.

Since the puppets — 128 of them — are animated by stop motion photography, they give the unique appearance of talking, walking and dancing without any controls as there are no strings to spoil the illusion.

One minute of film required 1400 still pictures. Bunin indicated that sheets were used to record the action. For instance, he illustrated from a tablet of black ruled paper that if on a particular film the first puppet had to say the word "Lydia", seven frames (still pictures) had to be photographed to make the mouth movements for the word. Asked if there were any words that were especially hard to pantomimed by tediously changing the puppet's mouth between each picture Bunin answered, "A word like 'prune' could drive a man crazy. I wouldn't take a script with the word 'prune' in it. You have to make a compound lip movement — sort of out and round at the same time."

Mr. Bunin was determined to make a film that was authoritative and pictorially an authentic *Alice in Wonderland*. Accordingly, he secured the assistance and advice of the Lewis Carroll Society of London and worked closely with authorities at Oxford where "Carroll", Charles Dodgson was a professor of mathematics. The characters were made to resemble the famed John Tenniel illustrations. He secured the services of Dallas Bower (co-director with Lawrence Olivier's pictures) who is an authority on the Victorian era. The sets for the prologue, including the room where Alice lived and the Dean's study, are nearly exact replicas of these two rooms at Oxford at the time Carroll wrote his celebrated story.

The combination of all these ideas, techniques, actors and experiments in the finished product gives the general impression of the never — never land growing "curiouser and curiouser". Within its native limitations, it is an interesting and unique piece of work rising at times to the fanciful heights of the author's original dreams. It has produced much pleasure for many in the audience; it has given the critics a Roman holiday, but above all it has resulted in movie history and a step forward for the art of puppetry.

Lament of a Movie Columnist

George Latshaw

(UP) Hollywood, - The current success and dither about those new puppet films sweeping the country has well nigh turned the Movie Columnist into an extinct bird of prey overnight. Believe me, we are not going to lay it taking down. The Big Beef (of which there is no shortage) is that there simply ain't hot copy in puppets, and more than one Hollywood correspondent has been going beserk since these puppet films, put out by independent producers across the country, have made major bid for the market. Lolly Parsons, always one to have the last word, couldn't even get the first word on yesterday's column, and blasted the puppet world for not recognizing her "exclusive" title of mother confessor. No elopments, no reconciliation, no spats, no quarrels - in short, the puppet world by behaving like a bunch of dummies, has dried up her stock in trade, the joyful, juicy morsel Jimmy Fidler busted his G-string trying to lambaste divorce, but all he could get was the split up between Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers . . . no longer on a tandem control. Hedda Hopper was having fits between hats - puppets don't go anywhere, they don't DO nothing . . . they shouldn't, she added. It's a plot, she wailed thru her Mr. John veil . . . did you ever try getting the "inside story of a marinet?" Where's the glamour in a hunk of white pine wearing oil paint make-up and jumping around in some old dyed jersey underwear.

Much the same story comes from Adele St. John, whose personal life friendship stories appear in "Photoplay." "I've lost 35 pounds since this puppet boom" she moaned from her chaise lounge. "I can't keep up. Everybody's an unknown . . . and suddenly they are a star. You ask the producer's where they come from, what's their background, and they point to a Plastic Wood can . . . sometimes 5 pounds, sometimes 25 pounds, but it is all the same. It's inhuman. They don't have any likes or dislikes - the flacks at all the studios are going mad, because they don't have any histories to go on . . . "talent searches" are out . . . they want a 65 year old man; one week they haven't anything, the next week there is a tailor made 65 year old, who'll stay that way, and that is good box office, or would be for someone like Clark Gable, but on the other hand . . . they don't get born, grow up, marry, have children, use Lux, oh, it's ruining the Lux people; they had to cancel Radio Theater for the rest of the season . . . none of those puppet ingenues use soap. Isn't it sickening?" Then she laughed, lighting up the pale violet shadows around her eyes for a moment. "They pulled a good one on Lolly Parsons! She was going to use Gigi on the Jergens lotion commercial, and when Lolly asked her where she got the skin you love to touch, Gigi said from sandpaper! Ole hatchet face almost had a stroke!" Miss St. John's maid came in to draw the blinds, and it was time for her Hadacol, so I left.

Phoned Earl Wilson in New York, and he admitted being as high and dry as the rest . . . no kick left in pinching a starlet, or storming unexpectedly into a star's dressing room. Confessed being an early casualty

to a flirtatious experiment. In trying to find a little give in a certain Congo dancer's derriere, he encountered a carpet tack. Several stitches were required to close the wound. "To think I used to knock falsies", he added, "these puppet babies are stacked, but stone! No feeling! Even the ones that wink their eyes. Met this Bubbles Divine, "in the flesh" . . . finger puppet stuff, and you know what she had up there?" His voice croaked, . . . "Golf balls!"

Found Erskine Johnson muttering to himself on the street. "Dirtiest trick of the week", he was snorting when I caught up at Hollywood and Vine. "What is?" said I, ready for anything. "Puppets! Thought I had a scoop . . . the entire cast of "Ant and the Grasshopper" on suspension! Big deal, you know, happens every day, one or two stars at a studio, but NEVER the whole cast. Figured it would be the biggest thing since they started from scratch on "Forever Amber" . . . raced all the way across the country." Then followed a choice vocabulary which is unprintable, so to get back to basis English, I asked what happened. "Well, I got there - and the entire cast was suspended all right . . . but from a hanging rail. Marionettes! Big joke!" He took a Foodini puppet out of his coat and stamped on it.

Found Sidney Skolsky sitting on the floor of a phone booth at Schwab's Drug store. There were so many cigarette butts around, he looked like he was sitting in a popcorn machine, and he was drinking coke and aspirin. "What's new?" whispered Skolsky, and then "I'll tell you! This industry is dead! In place of the Star System, they got the Petrified Forest. Puppetry has choked off the life-blood of columnists . . . everybody in it's gotta be a deMille. Where you gonna get stories? Sure it's O.K. to mention a writer has a baby, or Merle Oberon marries her cameraman. Once in a while technical people is O.K. for a column . . . Edith Head designs clothes, Herman Sprockett collects props . . . Gladys Tidings is a stand-in, but who takes that for a steady diet? I'll tell ya! Nobody!" The phone rang and he took it sitting down. O.K., O.K., so I'm wrong." He hung up. "Try to spice up a story a bit about the "Bared Productions", till some proof reader gets wise and finds out it is spelled Baird. What's to write about? I'll tell ya! Hopped out to see Disney - he's powerless against puppets. Had to use living actors to get him out of the red, lost his shirt fighting the Bunin's puppet film of "Alice" . . . now that's all the big thing; after the restraining order he had to mortgage "Treasure Island." Wanna know something else? I'll tell ya! These puppets are trying to decentralize the industry and give California back to the citrus growers. Hollywood is dead! Now it's all Mousetrap City, Indiana, and Rose-In-Blum, Connecticut .

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has withdrawn its customary award, feeling a little foolish offering a plaster Oscar to a wooden actor. "Grauman's Chinese Theater" went bust when none of the puppet stars could attend the premieres - but it makes a dandy drive-in and the car hops are very REAL. Only Darryl Zanuck seems ready to meet the new challenge of the puppet world. He has secretly acquired the film rights for a re-make of "Cyrano de Bergerac" starring Pinocchio. Sounds sensational. What showmanship!

Looks like Lolly, Hedda, Erskine and I will have to go out and buy a paper doll, that we can

Kukla and Ollie Return

Burr Tillstrom

Our trip was typically Kuklapolitan - full of laughs. On one side it followed a very touristy schedule - on the other side we saw things that one doesn't usually see on his first trip abroad. Kuk and Ollie put on their tuxedos, grabbed a French dictionary and did a fairly creditable performance abroad the Liberte. They were thrilled to perform in the personal Theater of Monsieur Hammon, the grand guy who has been with the French Line for 27 years. We saw the performance twice and I was delighted, practically the only French I could understand on the whole trip, - a wonderful thing how an art form can transcend language barriers.

I was particularly delighted with the reaction of the French children aboard. They seemed to know and love Guilois so much and take part in the performance without ever spoiling it. I also caught the tail end of a performance of Tuileries in Paris. To me this was not as great a performance as those aboard ship but the charm of the gardens and the children and Paris colored my reactions. I'm sure I would have loved the worst performance.

I believe my most thrilling experience in Europe and perhaps in my life as a member of an audience was watching a show done in a tiny left bank cafe called La Rose Rouge. We had heard there was an interesting puppet show there but went expecting nothing too exciting. It's impossible to describe or explain the performance that was given. To me it surpassed any performance in any medium of the theater, and those who were with me agree. It was a puppet show, and yet it was not a puppet show. They were puppeteers who used a puppet stage but didn't bother with puppets. They used their hands alone - four pairs of them. In a sense it was abstract and yet the simplest and clearest expression imaginable; they created moods and characters, beauty and motion and plots without one spoken word and without benefit of one single puppet character. Every puppeteer, every performer, every creative person should see it! It had the essence of all great art form. They were not bogged down with gimmicks, tricks, strings, joints, scenery, ballet shoes, costumes, vocal cords, etc. From somewhere they captured the essential spirit of creativeness and expressed it completely and to everyone's satisfaction. I came away wondering why anyone bothered to carve or paint figures or, for that matter, why singers, actors or dancers ever bothered.

Kuk and Ollie had a wonderful time everywhere we went. We did a little performance in Normandy for some school children. They took pictures atop Notre Dame, went fishing by the Seine, looked over a balcony at Eifel Tower. Kukla and Ollie were the first ones to get an open window as we wound our way up the Finiculers in Switzerland. They did a show for Americans and Italians overlooking the Arno and the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. I do believe the three of us could settle down in Florence for evermore. Still Kukla was mighty happy to see the Statue of Liberty and the first thing Ollie did on arrival was to order a hamburger and a chocolate milkshake.

Our trip was not nearly long enough but we saw enough wonderful things to make us want to go back. We found the people friendly and smiling and we'd like to have time to make more friends next time.

For further accounts in detail, please refer to "Kukla, Fran and Ollie", Monday through Friday, 6:00 P.M., CST or one day, perhaps, Ollie will finish his book, "through Western Europe with Camera, Guide and Kukla."

The Salzburg Marionettes

The arrival of the Salzburg Marionettes in New York City this fall is eagerly anticipated by music lovers as well as puppeteers. The famous troupe, arriving here in September, following the conclusion of the Salzburg Festival, may strike a new note in the introduction of children to classical music. At least that is the opinion of Artur Rodzinski, noted symphonic orchestra conductor, and the father of a six-year-old son.

Arriving for its first American concert tour, the Salzburg Marionettes will perform Mozart's operas, humorous plays about the great composer, together with fairy tales and ballet set to Mozart's music. Comments Rodzinski, "Children's universal interest in marionettes, if my son Ricky is any criterion, and American children's vast affection for television characters, like Howdy Doody and Lucky Pup, leads one to believe and hope that the Salzburg Marionettes may be a way of introducing them to classical music in an equally affectionate fashion."

Though the operatic marionettes are essentially an adult musical divertisement, and have been an outstanding musical attraction in Europe since 1913, Rodzinski believes that marionettes are physically scaled to a child's world. He says. "The attention span of very young children which tends to be flitting at a formal concert, is likely to be more continuous when they are given a story to watch as well as sounds to hear." Under such circumstances music, as part of an interesting story, can be enjoyed and absorbed without the effort for conscious attention.

The Salzburg Marionettes, three and one half feet tall, accurately and elaborately costumed, perform on a portable stage against a background of authentic sets to the recorded music of the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra and a chorus of picked voices. Recordings have been made in English for the American tour.

The puppets originated with Anton Aicher, well known sculptor and father of Herman Aicher, the present director. The puppets have a sculptural technique, rather than the wood carving approach, and are said to be exceedingly lifelike, with a fluid movement obtained through their sculptural like construction.

The repertoire for the American tour will consist of three of Mozart's lighter operas, two humorous plays about him, two ballets and four fairy tales. The tour will open in N. Y. on October first, cover the Eastern seaboard, Middle West and South before returning to N. Y. for special holiday performances the last two weeks in December.

Erpinotto and the ERP

Walter Lucas, a special correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* writes a headline feature story "Erpinotto Sells ERP to Italian Children." Then he explains how entranced and intrigued the bombed-out villagers, young and old are with the puppets who are touring Italy with the story of American aid.

The Economic Cooperation Administration has chosen for its educational program two puppets, Erpinotto, a sort of an Italian Hopalong Cassidy with a freckled face, snub nose, T shirt and baseball cap, and Pulcinello, the traditional Italian puppet and fairy character, who typifies the common man and national hero.

According to Mr. Lucas, Erpinotto is part of "Operation Bambi", a European Recovery project which consists of many big mobile busses equipped with collapsible puppet theaters, movie projectors, documentary films, cut-out games, flood lights and loud speaking equipment. These busses travel from hill town to hill town in areas not easily accessible to radios and newspapers with a two-hour movie and puppet show illustrating how Americans and Italians are working together to rebuild Italy's industry and economics and to strengthen democratic institution against totalitarianism.

Erpinotto has been so successful (explaining to the clapping, giggling, cheering crowds what the Americans are trying to do for Italy and how this is not just charity, but working together for mutual benefit) that ECA has increased its traveling units from 12 to 36. Last year 3,079 shows were given to something like 19,000,000 adults and children, according to *Christian Science Monitor*, which ends the article—"Erpinotto is only a puppet but he is doing a man sized job, like a midget St. George helping to stay the dragon of communism."

Puppetry in Religious Education

William R. Jacoby

I. Education, to be effectual, must be visual.

A child cannot be taught in the same way as an adult. An adult is conversant with abstract ideas, philosophy, logic and reasoning. He is able to draw upon a fund of past experiences and a reservoir of latent knowledge. All these enable him to grasp new ideas, while a child has none of these tools of learning.

There are two things a child can understand — simple words and pictures. Nearly every department of education has adopted its own type of visual education. The Army, for instance, depends far less upon the spoken words of the instructor than upon a film to get across an idea. Everything from "How to Care for your Rifle" to "The Effects of the

(Continued on page 20)



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

BURR TILLSTROM, KUKLA, FRAN AND OLLIE

Kukla, Fran and Ollie, the puppet TV show which has won so many awards as the best children's show, is "not a children's show", according to Burr Tillstrom. "It is," he insists, "a show for adults. The only interest for the very young children is in the motion of the puppets. The dialogue is not comprehensive to them. However, 10 to 12 year olds catch on very rapidly and soon grasp the situations."

No script is used for the Tillstrom show, - this probably accounts for the freshness and originality which set it apart from all other TV puppet shows. According to Burr, before telecast time, he sits down with his producer and a situation is agreed upon. From then on, the rest is ad lib. The show goes on and on and no one knows what will develop.

Back from a summer tour of France, Italy and Switzerland, Burr and his "family" return to the screen for another year, but have taken time to write an account of their adventures abroad. (Read it in this issue).

THE EMPEROR'S NIGHTINGALE

One of the many delightful scenes from Trnka's charming film version of the tale by Hans Christian Anderson. ((See story in this issue).

OKLAHOMA CITY AND SEATTLE JUNIOR LEAGUES

Above . . . Biblo and Mrs. Van der Sniff are seen in the library in a scene from the Oklahoma City Junior League's library bond issue campaign show. (See story in this issue).

Below . . . A publicity shot taken for the Seattle P.T.A. Family Festival Bazaar. The premiere was given in the kindergarten class at the Broadway School, and the mixture of emotions on the children's faces gives a good idea of its reception. The puppeteers are, left to right, Mrs. Charles Easter, Chairman of the Broadway Family Festival Bazaar, Mrs. Walter R. Weber, Director of Puppets with the Broadview Mother's Cooperative Play Group, and Mrs. Paul Whalen, Publicity Chairman of the P. T. A.

Mrs. Weber writes, "Anyhow, we caused a traffic jam and gave ten short variety shows that evening. We had fun, and made a profit for the Bazaar."

Puppets shown are nursery rhyme characters, Jack and Jill. Skating bear and clown are also members of the cast. Mrs. Weber admits however that the puppets really belong to her two youngsters, 4 and 6, who





BURR
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EMPEROR'S

NIGHTINGALE





Oklahoma City *and* Seattle Junior Leagues





ALICE
in
WONDERLAND





by
LOU
BUNIN

JOE OWENS



'Y' Puppetry Class

...

JOHN SHIRLEY



from
CZECHOSLOVAKIA



Turned Ball Heads





have had simple puppets for toys for the last two years. Most of their controls are one bar, five string controls.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Lou Bunin's strong puppet characters speak for themselves. The real Alice, played by Carol Marsh, had a hard time holding her own against such characters as the Rabbit, the mad Hatter, the Duchess, and others in this fantastic tale of the inhabitants of Wonderland. (See story in this issue).

JOE OWENS AND "Y" PUPPETRY CLASS

Left to right, Frank Bezzel, Jo Gilbert, Joe Owens, instructor, and Gary Owens, members of the Schenectady "Y" puppet class. Altho Joe terms himself a hobbyist, he, his wife Mary and son and daughter have produced many plays and variety shows in the Schenectady area, as well as TV shows on WRGB, and have performed several times for the Puppetry Festival. His puppets are built with a great deal of technical skill, and he has contributed several technical pages to the *Grapevine* and the *Journal*. He has also served as Television Consultant and Council Member of the P of A.

JOHN SHIRLEY

John Shirley, of Minneapolis, Minn., is responsible for the material from which the report on the Minneapolis Institute of Puppetry was compiled. John, a night club entertainer, puppeteer and member of the Twin City Puppetry Guild was one of the members largely responsible for the success of this meeting. (See Regional Activities for the account of the meeting).

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND TURNED BALL HEADS

The exhibition of Czechoslovakian puppets circulated by the Czech government introduced several types of material and construction new to puppeteers in this country. Foremost among these were the heads made from a new type of semi-transparent plastic. Apparently cast in a mold, the same head was used for several characters, with paint, wigs, make-up, etc responsible for the different characterizations.

The turned ball heads, typical of earlier Czech puppets, were more familiar, but displayed many new possibilities. Members of the Institute experimented with turned ball heads and secured astounding results with a surprisingly small amount of effort. So, for something "different", try a turned ball head.

(Continued from page 9)

Atom Bomb" are seen upon the movie screen in an impressive manner.

Everywhere, visual education is being accepted as the most thorough and rapid means of imparting knowledge effectively, - except in that most important department of them all — that which trains the moral and spiritual faculties of the child.

Why? Because visual education, in religious circles comes high. With 30-minute films renting from \$10.00 to \$17.50, very few churches can maintain an adequate program.

Because too few teachers realize the importance of approaching the heart through the eye. Educators affirm that 90 percent of what a child learns enters through his vision. The other 10 percent may be credited to his other senses. Too many teachers lecture, too many expound, too many assume that the child knows more than he does, too many waste time explaining facts that have no relation to a child's needs, too many use an adult teaching technique.

Therefore, the teacher or director of religious education, who does not adapt his teaching methods to the learning instincts and senses of the child, defeats his own purpose.

II. Puppetry answers a thousand teaching problems.

Some years ago, I was asked to take a job as director of Religious Education in Southern Illinois. My job was to organize Institutes of training, gather teachers together for discussion of teaching methods. The teachers were willing, but without any training. They had given teaching no thought whatever. Few had ever read a book on the subject. The commonly accepted practice was to appear before the class and say, "Johnny, read the first verse and tell us what it means. Fine! Mary, read the second verse."

In our Institute, we advocated this advice. "Get something before your children they can see. Make it move, if possible!" To illustrate, I made a small sand box. Clothespins were the characters. "This is Jesus — these are Peter, James and John - these are the other nine disciples. Here is Jairus' little daughter, — ill, — now dead. Jesus enters, takes the little girl by the hand, raises her up, - alive, happy and hungry!

Amazingly, the idea caught on. It was so simple, and no teacher had the nerve to say it was beyond her ability. On my next round, several teachers reported, with enthusiasm, that they had improved the original clothespin idea by painting faces on the pins. Another not to be outdone said, "We dressed our figures in crepepaper robes, using a different color for each character!"

So, through this method, we arrived at puppets, - simple at first, none the less effective. What they lacked in detail and refinement, the child supplied with his vivid imagination. It is better to have a child's version of a character or an event, than to have a much more beautiful figure or more exacting story which is the product of the adult leader. We ask, after the story has been read, "What do you think he looked like? What do you think he said? What do you think the other person replied? How do you think he was dressed?" until the story lives before the child because he has produced it with his own fertile imagination. He has a fund of ideas, - he has something to express.

Used in this fashion, puppets encourage the child to dig, explore and investigate. He attacks the "where-fores" and the "why-fores" of the story.

Puppets excite the imagination. A child can visualize anything mentally. He is able to enter into the situation with intense realism. Toy guns are not "play guns" to him. They are the real thing and he will shoot you down dead as a mackerel if you get into his way. In like manner, he appreciates Bible people and Bible events, only to the extent to which he can live with them and share their experiences.

A puppet play uses all available talent and ability. Script writing, plot composition, dialog, designing and making the puppets, painting scenery, building props, sewing garments, composing music or poetry,-there is a job for every talent and ability.

III. The Bible Has a Tremendous Dramatic Value.

How any teacher can fail to be thrilled by the Bible is a mystery. God has used the dramatic method of telling the story. The Garden of Eden, The Fall of the Tower of Babel, The Flood, The Passover, The Crucifixion - all these, and more, are deliberately made dramatic to appeal to men's emotions. The men who wrote the Bible used all the methods and principles of the dramatist to adequately portray some of the most dramatic incidents the world has ever witnessed.

Then why do teachers teach the Bible as though it were a telephone directory? Actually, many children have been driven away from Sunday School by boring teachers, - just as many adults have been discouraged from attending church because of dry and tedious sermons.

The Bible is a storehouse of story material. Notice a few of the thrillers:

1. Two Boys-Alone in a Big World . . . Cain and Abel once were the only boys in the world. They had to do all the quarreling and fighting. (They had to do all the good things, too. So, they divided these things between them. Abel chose to do the good and fine things. Cain decided to be the first juvenile delinquent.

2. Just Two Minutes to Live . . . Isaac, a boy of twelve, journeyed with his father to a distant mountain. His father had told him they went to sacrifice to the Lord. Suddenly he looks up to see his own father standing over him with a sharp knife.

3. From Pit to Palace . . . Eleven evil brothers sought to slay their younger brother, Joseph, but within a few years he sits beside the King of Egypt as their judge. It would be very embarrassing to stand before a judge whom you once had tried to kill, wouldn't it?

Does one want detective stories? Love stories? Horatio Algiers stories? Adventure stories? Stories of intrigue? Sea stories? Ghost stories? They are all in the Bible waiting for some one to use them.

The dramatic possibilities of the Bible are not limited to the Sunday School teacher or the religious leader. All of these stories would be appreciated by the community, by clubs, by various organizations, even by the press, if they could be told as they were lived. But we who are responsible for their telling, too often have hidden them beneath the chaff of the commonplace and the ordinary.

Turned Ball Heads

Do you have difficulty modeling heads? Why not try turned ball heads? Do you have a manual training department in your school? If so, the boys will be delighted to turn out head forms on the lathe for you. If not, some neighboring wood shop may be glad to accommodate you. Material, - a 3x3 length of white pine to fit the lathe, a 36 inch piece will make nine or ten heads, according to size. Turn one egg shape after another, - no space between. There is no need for uniformity, - remember people's heads are all different shapes. Sand with fine sandpaper before removing from lathe. Saw apart when completed, and sand saw cuts.

No personality, you say, in an egg shaped head? There is no easier way to create personality. The variety of characterizations possible is only limited by your imagination and your "scrap box". Your scrap box is the essential part of your equipment. It should contain button molds, buttons, bicycle blinkers for animal eyes, wood scraps, the bags of wood turnings sold at Christmas time on the toy counter, yarn - all colors, felt (buy scraps at an athletic emblem company), all types of fur for hair (holds up better than artificial hair), leather (handicraft companies sell scrap), cast off beads and jewelry, colored sponge rubber, etc.

Attach the neck and let it set before doing anything at all to the head. For a hand puppet, drill a hole one inch big where the neck should be. Tilt the head on the neck, or you will have a "chinless" puppet. Insert a roll of flexible cardboard the size of the hole and build up a plastic wood neck on this. Remove the cardboard when plastic wood is hard. For a marionette, insert a short dowel in the hole, secure with plenty of glue, then build up a neck around it with plastic wood.

From here on, experiment! And then experiment some more! Keep the head simple . . . it is the effect you are after. Look at it from a distance. Omit a feature if it isn't essential. Make the most of the ones that give it character.

Use brads and airplane cement or any good adhesive to attach features. Wooden parts such as button molds for eyes and wooden ears may be firmed by working in a bit of plastic wood in the cracks or behind the ears for re-enforcement. It is sometimes easier to give the head a base coat of flesh color and paint eyes, etc, before attaching. Always paint before putting on hair.

If you are more advanced, try making the heads a little larger and combine some carving with the other processes. Amazing results can be attained. Or, if you are adept at the lathe, more interesting foundation shapes can be attempted. It is well to sketch these roughly first.

Those who were privileged to see the unusual Czechoslovakian exhibit at the Puppetry Festival realized the possibilities of this type of head. Jan Malik's influence, seen in this exhibit, could well be transferred to American puppetry. There is no striving for intricate detail, every head is an example of simplicity and strength.

Oklahoma Junior League

When a bond issue was proposed in Oklahoma City to include a new library, the hand-puppet group of the Oklahoma City Junior League had an idea — involving puppets, of course. From a converted Wallace puppet won at a Festival auction they made Stacks, the ghost of the old library, and added two new characters: Biblo, the spirit of the new library, and Mrs. Van der Sniff, a grande dame of civic and social circles who needed to be convinced that a new library was a necessity for her as well as everyone in the community. They told their story with lively dialogue and opportunities for plenty of puppet business plus the addition of judicious use of props and added a chorus of dancing books singing cleverly written lyrics to Gilbert and Sullivan tunes explaining the treasury of knowledge held between their covers.

It was trouped to service clubs, P.T.A.s, store lobbies, shop windows and everywhere crowds gathered. Before the group had finished they were beseeched to include other items in the bond issue such as an improved airport, traffic lights, recreation facilities and others. They did. The bond issue passed.

No statistics are available to prove how much influence was wielded by Biblo and his friends, but who would underestimate the power of a puppet?

Regional Activities

The Institute of Puppetry, sponsored jointly by the University of Minnesota and the Twin City Puppeteers in cooperation with the P of A, July 16th through July 19th, proved to be so successful that plans are already under way to repeat it again next year. Although the registration did not meet original expectations (46 registrants) and there were a few hitches in organization, the promoters feel well rewarded for the time and effort put into this first experiment.

According to John Shirley, the Institute paid for itself in the interest aroused concerning both puppets and the P of A. Of special value, he feels, is the awareness of the University that Puppetry has a great deal to offer in the field of education. The University seemed very much impressed by what puppetry has to offer both to the public and to its several departments. As a result, more complete cooperation was volunteered by the University for future meetings.

The Institute opened Monday evening with the Duncan's presentation of "The Glowing Bird." This superb performance was attended by 1600 people, an unusually large crowd for a summer presentation. Evidently an eye-opener to blasé newspaper men and college officials, this performance got the Institute off to a good start and helped secure the cooperation needed to make the Institute a success.

Tuesday the Institute was opened by Fred. E. Berger, director of the Continuation Center. Reid Hastie of the Department of Education out-

lined the objectives of the Institute. Marjorie Shanafelt talked on the history of puppets while Ruth Duncan followed with an explanation of puppet types. The afternoon was devoted to Puppets in Education with Mildred Page and Helen Farum in charge. Emphasis was on puppets in elementary education and the use of unorthodox materials. Movies were shown; slides from Marjorie Shanafelt's outstanding collection were studied; Cedric Lindholm displayed his collection of paper theaters, one of the largest private collections in the nation, and ended with Lem Williams's demonstration of his egg-head marionette.

Wednesday was filled with lectures and demonstrations on construction by Lem Williams and John Shirley. All types of marionettes from the simplest to the most professional types were presented. Lucile Hudson covered the subject of cloth hand puppet construction. The evening performance, by the local puppeteers, was highlighted by the performance of Lucile Hudson, Edna Garrison, Marjorie Shanafelt, Bob Longfield, Mary Williams and Lem Williams.

Thursday opened with a session on drama and staging with a panel of experts selected from the University staff and directed by William Duncan. From there, the group selected their course from three different workshops, - puppets in education, advanced construction, and scenery and staging. Each shop was available for any type of problem or demonstration as the individual or group demanded. George Larsen (Pinxy) added to this session an excellent demonstration of wood carving. The evening performance was under the direction of Pauline Benton and her Red Gate Shadow Players who gave their presentation to an audience of about 1500.

Gallery night, patterned after the traditional art exhibit gallery night was originally planned to be a fill-in for the night program, but turned out to be one of the highlights of the program. It was held in the exhibit hall, giving the public a chance to meet, talk with and ask questions of the exhibitors. Twin City Puppeteers held informal coffee hours which provided a splendid outlet for gab fests and social activity.

All in all, John declares, the Institute was a success, both in the opinion of the sponsors and those who attended. They received splendid cooperation from the college, the newspapers, radio and TV stations. From all reports, it is evident that the venture paid off in increased prestige for puppets themselves, the Twin City Group and the P of A. The Twin City Group, one of the oldest groups to be affiliated with the P of A, has always been an active group, but they deserve special commendation for this last successful project.

Hand Puppets

For only 50 cents you can obtain patterns for five adorable hand puppets be made from felt or cloth, - a cunning mouse, a pooch, a cocky rooster, a baby elephant and Santa Claus. Order patterns GHN338, GHN339, GHN340, GHN341 and GHN342 from Goodhousekeeping Bulletin Service, 57th St. at 8th Ave., New York 19, N. Y. Suitable for children or small stage.



STEVE AT MIDDLEBURY, IND

In August, Fern Zwickey postcarded from Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, England, and France that she was sorry to have missed the Fest. Well, things are tough all over.

Ralph Cheese taught a summer course at San Francisco State College, "where we produced Hansel and Gretel as a problem for teaching children, and an adult production of Moliere's Don Juan. I am on the staff of State College and teach a craft class in puppetry during the regular session. My other activity is now a TV program twice a week on KGO-TV, called **Willie & The Baron**, being a series of what I call Impossible Interviews . . . an all marionette program in which characters of fact and fiction are invited as guests, to answer questions about themselves and the stories they are from. I write two scripts each week, and adapt marionettes I have when possible. My son **Dion** is my chief assistant, and **Lettie Connell** second assistant as well as voicing the female characters." . . .

Lawrence Berthelson & Eugene Pergament of New Haven, Conn., had their clown and dog on display in a local drug store advertising shampoo products, and they have been appearing at Donat's Town Ho, Milford, Conn. night club, which presents kiddie shows every Sunday afternoon. A 30 week run! . . . **Christian Science** gave P of A it's customary kind attention in reviewing the Fest (July 18th issue) and a nice personal interview with **Rufus Rose**. . . . **Detroit News Pictorial** for July 8 did a nice spread on **Cora & Bil Baird** and the 'Flahooley puppets . . . **Minneapolis Sunday Tribune** on the same date plugged the **University of Minnesota Puppet Institute** with pictures in black-and-white and color. Thanks, **Twin City Puppeteers**, for having them mention the P of A . . . P of A was mentioned too in a writeup about the **Russell V. Quam** family and the **Continental Puppeteers**, in the **Phoenix Gazette** of July 21, and in a **Harvey, Ill.** writeup in July about **Mary & Ed's Marionettes**. (Whew! I'll bet that title causes confusion on the telephone: can't you just hear it - "Hello. This is Mary and Ed's Marionettes." "Marionettes marionettes?" "No, Mary and Ed's Marionettes!" "You seem to be stammering, or there's an echo." And on and on.) **Mary & Ed DeGraff** do shows at the Cerebral Palsey Camp every year, and find that puppets are great stimuli in rehabilitation. Ed says, "Here is a field for the P. of A. The amount of good that could be done is limitless. Perhaps some listing of camps and homes that need a show could have one when a company was in the area. Can't you see the organization with a pure unselfish motive growing and growing?" If

you'd like to pursue this thought you can reach the DeGraffs at 14856 Riverside Drive, Harvey, Ill. . . .

Lettie Connell (see above) went to the **Seattle Puppet Festival** last June, and had a **Wow** of a time! The people were terrific, the Art Museum exhibit was wonderful, the **Pat Patterson** film, "Hello, Pirro" was great. You should have as much fun as Lettie . . . While we're on films - seems there's more and more of them: **Castle Films** has one called "Santa Claus' Punch & Judy." . . . **Velma Dawson** is doing the puppets for a video adaptation of the radio show "Sleepy Joe," by Jimmy Scribner, being filmed on the Coast by the Cardinal Co. . . **Basil Milovsoroff** is spending "much more time" on his new puppets, "for photogenic qualities." **Ethel & Alfred Wallace** visited the Milovsoroffs in Aug . . . **Olga & Martin Stevens** have added another 276 square feet of shop space to their studio, and have shot three in a series of puppet films for TV, based on the **Toymaker** idea.

Burr Tillstrom, while in Paris, renewed his old acquaintance with Tamara Toumanova of the Paris Opera Ballet. It was she who, when she first saw Burr's big-nosed puppet 15 years ago, exclaimed, "Ah - a kukla!" a word which, as any Russian peasant knows, means "a doll". As Uncle Herbie in the **TV forecast** puts it, "Burr thought that was a fine name, indeed, and ever since then, Kukla's name has become known to boys and girls all over the country. So you can see that when Tamara and Burr and Kukla all got together in Paris this summer, it was a joyous reunion. They chuckled over the old times, and Tamara was told about our Kukla, Fran and Ollie show that is back for a winter of fun on station WNBQ, Monday through Friday."

W. S. Berger, who gave the talk on ventriloquism at the Festival, gave said Fest a very enthusiastic writeup in the July-August issue of **The Oracle**, official publication of The International Brotherhood of Ventriloquists, and put in a fine plug for us among our entertainment brothers whose puppet stages are their own laps . . . **Dick (Call Me Mister) Weston**, was released from service by Uncle Sam, and has returned to 3536 33rd Ave. South, Minneapolis 17, Minn., and is again accepting engagements in civilian life.

Gayle and Doug Anderson have completed a ten weeks contract in the mountain hotels north of N. Y. City, and are off to Bermuda for a weeks cruise, magic and puppet performances enroute.

Sue Hastings is Director of Puppets & Marionettes at the University of Miami Theatres . . . **Les & Ellie Heath** (The Leselli Marionettes) couldn't come to the Festival 'cause they had a date at the Last Frontier in Las Vegas that week . . . The night of July 3rd, while we at the Institute were discussing audiences in Clawson Hall, **Herb Scheffel & Bubbles Divine** were playing to one aboard R. M. S., "Queen Mary". . . . **Dottie Gleason** had a beautiful two-page spread in the June issue of **School Arts Magazine** entitled "Flexible Faces Bring Spontaneity to Puppetry" which included a nice plug for P. of A. **Dottie & Joany** were at Noyes Junior Camp, Portland, Conn. again this summer, where creative expression with puppetry is a featured activity. Tell it to

STEVE, Middlebury, Indiana

Round Robin Letter

Mrs. Alice Fox (sweetheart of the Festival), 104 Fair St., Coopers-town, N. Y., suggests a Round Robin letter for teachers, - wonderful idea we think. If you are interested, write her at once. She has had a splendid background of experience, and is especially interested in puppetry problems for the elementary child. Share your experiences with others. Several have already started, so don't delay getting your name on the list.



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